



LAKE

ONALASKA

## PROTECTION & REHABILITATION DISTRICT

### CORRESPONDENCE:

UWEX Room 112 Courthouse  
La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601  
608-785-9593

June 29, 1987

In 1975, the Lake Onalaska Protection and Rehabilitation District was formed by the order of the La Crosse County Board of Supervisors. The main purposes of the District were as follows:

- (1) Stimulate collection of information
- (2) Develop lake management alternatives
- (3) To promote projects that will lead to an improved lake environment

A study that was done by the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, River Studies Center, concluded that the lake had lost approximately 31% of the original lake volume. The Onalaska Rehabilitation Feasibility Study further made recommendations on some possible procedures for the betterment of the lake:

- (1) Watershed improvement
- (2) Hydraulic alternatives to either divert flow into or out of the lake
- (3) Dredging to increase habitat diversity
- (4) Chemical treatment of the lake along with the harvesting of rooted aquatic vegetation

### PROGRAMS INVOLVING THE DISTRICT:

- (1) Lake Onalaska Rehabilitation Feasibility Report:

Dr. T. Claflin - University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

This study synthesized existing data and a sediment study to determine the effects and rate of sedimentation since the forming of the pool in 1937.

- (2) Weed Control Program - Chemical

Treatment Zones were set up and chemical spraying took place in those areas.

- (3) Created a Lake Onalaska Contour/Depth Map

Originally this map was sold for \$1.00, but later the map was printed on waterproof paper and retail price was set at \$4.00.

- (4) Weed Harvesting Program

In 1978, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service refused to renew the permit to continue chemical spraying of weeds on Lake Onalaska. Therefore, the District has resorted to mechanical removal of aquatic weed growth. This form of control has a lasting period of about three weeks before the weeds have had a chance to regrow.

over

- (5) The Macrophyte and Macroinvertebrate Population Study:  
In conjunction with the mechanical weed harvesting program, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service mandated that there be a study of the effects weed harvesting has had on the inhabitants of the Lake. The study found that there was no detrimental effects from the harvesting of weeds in such a manner.
- (6) A study was conducted to determine the effects of the continued deposit of sediments in Lake Onalaska. The study concluded that in the next 10-20 years, at present rates, the Lake would turn itself into a marshy waterbody.
- (7) The District took part in the creation of the "Comprehensive Master Plan for the Management of the Upper Mississippi River System." This Master Plan is the basis for Federal action to improve management of the River.
- (8) Conducted an experiment with a product called aquascreen to control aquatic plant growth around docks. The aquascreen is laid on the bottom and weighted down to hold it in place. The screen prevents the growth of plants in the covered area.
- (9) Persuaded the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to prepare a fisheries management for Lake Onalaska. The Plan is a guide for active management of all involved agencies for the improvement of the Lakes fish resources.
- (10) Actively participated in several Federal planning initiatives for management of the Upper Mississippi, including Lake Onalaska. These were the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers' Shoreline Management Plan, the Corps of Engineers' Land Use Allocation Plan, and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Refuge Master Plan, all plans that will determine how the Upper Mississippi is used and managed over the next 20 years.
- (11) Vigorously supported the enactment of Federal legislation called the Omnibus Water Bill of 1986 to provide for a 10-year, 200 million dollar resource management program for the Upper Mississippi River. The Bill was enacted by Congress and signed by the President. Tentatively, dredging for fisheries purposes and island creation for fish and wildlife purposes is scheduled to begin in 1989.
- (12) Probably the most important service that LOPRD takes part in is that of creating public support, and also creating a public awareness concerning those issues that pertain to the Lake.
- (13) The District also prepares a yearly newsletter that explains what has happened in the past year regarding the Lake, and also what will be happening in the year to come.

The Lake Onalaska Protection and Rehabilitation District tries to inform the public concerning the Lake, lobby for the Lake's constituents, and create a public voice concerning lake issues.